

Greetings Committee Chair for the Expansion of Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act,

I am writing to you and ask that you assist us to ensure our voice is heard. Below is my message:

I am taking some time to write about a concern that I have and I appreciate your time to hear my family's voice. We are concerned about the expansion of Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act in any way shape or form. Although House Bill 5959 and House Bill 5804 are well intentioned bills, they are based on naiveté. I am convinced that the end result would cause an imbalance of justice and freedom to those who base their personal standards on religious beliefs founded on their ancient code of standard.

I believe the intent of the guarantee of religious freedoms was not just about a person's selection of a church to attend, rather it is their way of life. I believe we would do much better protecting everyone's rights and freedoms and not those of just a few.

I will divulge a little about myself, so that you can identify whose voice I represent. I have a Doctorate degree in Evaluation, Measurement, and Research. I started out from a poor family and worked my way in industry as a blue collar professional with some administrative experience thrown in. I then worked to teach my trade to students while bettering myself on the ladder of education, all while raising a child. I currently have a family and we have reviewed and discussed the materials on these bills. Please do not lead us down this wrong road again as I am quite certain all of the ripples are not foreseeable. These bills represent bad policy and bad politics in the long run.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you,

David, Jennie, and Cissie MacQuarrie

269-254-2075

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David L. MacQuarrie, Ph.D.
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Testimony to the Commerce Committee

12/03/2014

Mira Krishnan (616) 458-3511
Chief Executive Officer mira.krishnan@grlgbt.org

The Network www.grlgbt.org



I do not support the expansion of Elliott-Larsen and that State Government should protect freedoms for all, not just a few. Please vote against both House Bills 5959 and 5804.

John Hodsdon

1827 Smallbrook Dr.

Troy 48085

Dear Commerce Committee Members:

It has come to my attention that you will be taking up H.B. 5959, shortly. I would like to encourage you to turn down voting for amending the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act, for several reasons.

Our Constitution already guarantees individual rights. It does not guarantee "group" rights. Therefore, those who would be singled out as a "specially protected class" of individuals, based on their sexual orientation, are already protected under our U.S. Constitution and therefore protected under Michigan law. To single them out in this manner, allowing them to use the force of onerous regulations to advance a popular political agenda, would have a chilling and deleterious effect on Michigan businesses, religious organizations and private citizens. By selecting one class to "protect," you would be subjecting another class of citizens to bullying tactics and expensive lawsuits.. Your decision to amend the bill in this manner would essentially have the effect of potentially violating the livelihood of anyone who chooses to object to this law by exercising their right to hold to their traditional views of family and sexuality, and that by doing otherwise, would be a violation of their own conscience. Across the country, proponents of this type of legislation are forcing business owners into shutting their doors because they are not willing to violate their own conscience.

Government should not be in the business of "protecting" one class of people while violating the freedom of religion and conscience of another.

I sincerely hope that you will choose to vote "NO" on amending the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act and vote, instead, to maintain the Constitutionally protected rights and personal liberties of all citizens.

Sincerely,

Regina Brim

Member of Oakland County Executive Committee

First, let me state my objection to this bill being brought forward in lame duck; there is a new legislature being seated in just a month and any "law: that affects our citizenry ought not be brought forward where it can be influenced by those who, because of their particular stance, can affect change as they

the committee to include "gender identity" and "gender expression" language in any amendment to the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act.

In 2005 I shared my transgender diagnosis with the Michigan university where I worked. Even though this conservative Christian school taught the standards of care that I was following, I faced significant discrimination such that I felt compelled to file an EEOC complaint in 2006. The original complaint is included with this testimony and was later amended to include retaliatory acts committed by the university. In March 2007 I reached a mediated settlement with the university and ended an exemplary career with this institution.

I had led the university's entrance into online education, developed and led the accreditation for most of the university's graduate programs, was recognized for my outstanding teaching, and even delivered a commencement address. Despite this background and my educational qualifications, I was unable to find full-time employment even though I submitted over 300 applications over the next six years for positions for which I was eminently qualified. I did reach the final interview stage on numerous occasions, but was never offered a position even though a corporate head hunter said I gave the best interview he had ever heard.

My situation is not different from most transgender people. Collectively, transgender people are significantly under-employed or unemployed. We face discrimination in many ways including employment, health insurance, and healthcare, even though the American Medical Association defines being transgender as a "serious medical condition" (2008 resolution of the AMA).

I encourage the committee to review the significant research on the discrimination transgender people face. A copy of this comprehensive study can be found at http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf.

All human beings are born with the potential to love another person. But who we find attractive is not something we decide for ourselves. That script is written for us. It's something we discover as we approach adulthood. To allow ignorance and prejudice based on something innate is a mistake.

As a father I am proud of my son – as proud as any parent. My boy's sexual orientation worried me, but only because I knew there are bullies in this world. Bullies can be stopped by ordinary people who know how to speak out and intervene. The solution to bullies is for everyone to maintain the same expectation of what's acceptable. But I believe we must begin that by writing those expectations into our laws.

Because of my son's mostly unimportant difference, I have a deeper understanding of other people who face broader prejudice and lack of understanding. That's why I call on you to include gender identity and expression in the protections in our civil rights laws. If those words aren't there, our schools and civic institutions won't spend the time to protect them. With the potential for bullying and other prejudices, laws must have those protections spelled out.

At PFLAG I met a transgender woman who wanted to start a new business. She needed licensing and to obtain it she was planning to go back in the closet for a few months. To start a business, you have to hide who you are inside?

A young man I know wasn't sure he would have his family's support if he told them he was gay. His employer offered to let him sleep in their store if his family threw him out. So if you're gay and not yet able to support yourself, keep your mouth shut.

If you wonder what a transgender teen looks like, go to any homeless shelter in New York City. There are thousands there. Thousands. The National Center for Transgender Equality says of 1.6 million homeless youth, 20-40% are LGBT.

If you're transgender and have been kicked out of your home, shelters will expect you to behave as if you're not transgender – so don't tell the truth or you'll be on the street.

It's not enough for federal housing regulations to give protection. Law determines behavior. State Law sets standards for the State's citizens. The compulsory nature of Law has the effect of forcing us to consider what's right. If you include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, you will save lives and protect children from prejudice, and ultimately violence. If you don't, you will by omission allow bullying to continue.

I'm proud that my home town and the township that surrounds it both have ordinances prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. I helped canvass my own neighborhood and we found such protection for jobs and housing had the support of 82% of registered voters. But there are efforts here in the Michigan House to circumvent ordinances like ours, and that's a case of the state denying our city the freedom to decide for itself what's right.

Our elected leaders have an obligation to protect the few against the whims or wishes of the majority; that's why our nation is a Republic and not a simple Democracy. Institutions always face pressures that

disadvantaged economic and cultural positions in American Society. Their household income is above average; many are influential in culture, business and in politics. They do not need government intervention to improve their position in society.

Yet there are dozens of examples across the country in which Christians and others have been discriminated against (reverse discrimination) , fired, fined, expelled, denied access to public property, stripped of tax benefits, or otherwise punished and penalized under such discriminatory "orientation" and "identity" laws.

The premise that Michigan has to give special protection to homosexual behavior and cross-dressing in order to be economically competitive is false. Actual economic performance data prove exactly the opposite. It is the conservative states that don't have discriminatory "orientation" and "identity" laws that lead the nation in new job creation, income growth, and population migration. Its the liberal states that have discriminatory laws that can't compete economically, such as Illinois and Massachusetts. Think, job-creating powerhouses like Texas, which doesn't have "sexual orientation" or "identity" laws and is experiencing tremendous economy growth. Don't fall for this propaganda.

Don't be fooled by the so called "religious" exemption to any bill. "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" is a weak bill and will not stop attacks against Christians, especially business owners. Best protection for religious freedom in Michigan is to defeat these two bills. Protect people of religious faith in Michigan and vote "NO" on Expanding Michigan's Civil Rights Act to include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity".

Thank you,
Mrs. Joan Jacobson, 5776 Musgrove Hwy., Lake Odessa 48849

Dear MI Representative,

Please Vote against expanding the Elliot Larson Act. Homosexual sexual conduct is not a civil right and is certainly not the same as being Black, Hispanic or female.

Who will stand up for our values and religious freedom? YOU MUST!

Vote "NO" on HB 5804

Vote "NO" on HB 5959

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mary Pryce

We understand that Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, Public Act 453 of 1976, prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, public services and educational facilities based on religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, familial status, or marital status. Representative Jim Dressel (R-Holland) first introduced legislation in 1983 to extend the protection of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Thirty one years later, neither state nor federal law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. As a result, it remains legal to terminate someone from a job solely for being gay or transgender, to deny someone housing based only on the individual's sexual orientation, and to refuse to serve someone in a restaurant based only on that person's gender identity.

The Human Rights Committee of Isabella County strives to provide as inclusive a community as possible, so that each person is welcomed and his or her contributions affirmed and celebrated. It is in this spirit of inclusivity and in continuous support of human rights and civil rights, that we write to request that the Michigan Legislature enact legislation to amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression without further delay.

Sincerely,

Maureen Eke, Chairperson, Human Rights Committee, Isabella County

Members:

Kevin Daum

Shirley Decker

Laura Gonzales

Wendy Hovey

Elizabeth Husbands

Robert Newby

Sue Poindexter

Pleas place this in public testimony

I do not support HB 5959 or HB 5804

Sincerely

Patrick H Duvendeck

197 Coutant St

If you want to apease non believers, then give them " civil unions " .

Kenneth L Peterson